

Biosecurity After the State Fair

BROOKINGS, S.D. - During the South Dakota State Fair, thousands gathered in Huron to take in the various entertainment and competitive events. A significant amount of interaction between people and animals was also generated creating opportunities for livestock to potentially share germs or diseases with each other.

In order to protect the health and wellbeing of animals and people, there are some simple steps animal owners can do after returning home from the fair, explained Taylor Grussing, SDSU Extension Cow-Calf Field Specialist.

"Since the State Fair is commonly the last show of the season for several show animals, a common trend, once returning home, is to turn your show animal back

out with the rest of your herd. However, because show animals were just exposed to several other animals from different operations with unknown health history, it is important to isolate show animals for approximately 30 days from any other animals that have not left the farm," Grussing said.

Isolate animals
To properly isolate animals, Grussing said it is recommended to keep animals returning home from the fair or other shows at a distance of 300 yards from other animals.

"There is no guarantee that your animals contracted any new diseases while exhibiting at the fair. However, by monitoring the animals for any signs of illness following the fair, you can

hopefully avoid the introduction of new infectious agents into your herd," she said.

If animals show any unusual health symptoms, contact your local veterinarian.

Clean equipment
Another good management practice Grussing encourages, is to clean manure and soil from all equipment, vehicles and trailers that were used to transport animals from the fair.

"Discard used bedding from trailers, and use soap and water, as well as disinfectant to clean all equipment that may have had

contact with other animals," she said.

In addition to cleaning livestock equipment and monitoring your animal's health, Grussing said it is also important to monitor your family's health since some zoonotic diseases have the potential of being spread between humans and animals at the fair.

"Although there were several hand washing stations throughout the fairgrounds, washing clothes and shoes upon arriving home will quickly remove any infectious debris that may have traveled with you," she

explained.

Although all livestock exhibitors are required to have health papers for their animals attending the fair, Grussing said being aware of the health of your animals prior to, during and after the fair is vital to maintain biosecurity on the farm and minimize the spread of diseases.

"Showing livestock is an enjoyable experience for all parties involved, and by following these guidelines you can protect the health of you and your livestock once the show season is over," Grussing said. ■iGrow

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